

Office of Childhood

Office of Special Education

March 2025

Annual Report on Children Referred to First Steps for the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA): Calendar Year 2024

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Purpose

Under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act or CAPTA (Public Law 111-320), a referral of a child under the age of three who is involved in a substantiated case of abuse or neglect must be made to the early intervention program funded by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In Missouri, the Part C of IDEA is known as First Steps.

The Missouri First Steps program contracts with a System Point of Entry (SPOE) in ten regions throughout the state. Each SPOE is responsible for the local administration of the program, including referral, intake, eligibility determination, and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development.

The Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS), Children's Division requires staff to refer any child under age three who meets the criteria of CAPTA to First Steps. This report provides information related to the children referred to First Steps with a referral source of CAPTA or DSS in calendar year 2024.

Children Referred to the First Steps Program

In calendar year 2024, 819 children were referred to the First Steps program by the Department of Social Services Children's Division. Of the 819 children, 461 children (56.3%) had a referral source of CAPTA, and 358 children (43.7%) had a referral source of DSS.

Of the 461 children referred with a referral source of CAPTA, 130 children (28.2%) were found eligible and reached the status of an IFSP. The remaining 331 children did not reach IFSP status due to the following reasons: 158 were withdrawn by a parent or guardian; 114 were Part C ineligible; 47 were unable to contact/locate; 7 were inquiry only*; four had moved out of state; and one was refused by SPOE.

Of the 358 children referred with a referral source of DSS, 88 children (24.6%) were found eligible and reached the status of an IFSP. The remaining 270 children did not reach IFSP status due to the following reasons: 137 were withdrawn by a parent or guardian; 70 were Part C ineligible; 59 were unable to contact/locate; three were inquiry only*; and one moved out of state

*Referral records that were closed with the reason *inquiry only* were included in this report. Inquiry only refers to those who are only seeking more information about the child or program.

Active Children by SPOE Region

Table 1 represents the 461 children referred to First Steps with a referral source of CAPTA and their eligibility percentages by SPOE region.

Table 1. CAPTA Referrals and First Steps Status for Calendar Year 2024

SPOE Region	Referred to First Steps	Reached IFSP	% Served
Region 1 - Greater St. Louis	37	7	18.9%
Region 2 - St. Louis County	41	12	29.3%
Region 3 - Northeast	22	7	31.8%
Region 4 - Northwest	17	5	29.4%
Region 5 - Greater Kansas City	69	18	26.1%
Region 6 - Central	47	19	40.4%
Region 7 - Southwest	30	12	40.0%
Region 8 - South Central	79	19	24.1%
Region 9 - East Central	77	17	22.1%
Region 10 - Southeast	42	14	33.3%
Total	461	130	28.2%

Table 2 represents the 358 children referred to First Steps with a referral source of DSS and their eligibility percentages by SPOE region.

Table 2. DSS Referrals and First Steps Status for Calendar Year 2024

SPOE Region	Referred to First Steps	Reached IFSP	% Served
Region 1 - Greater St. Louis	19	7	36.8%
Region 2 - St. Louis County	36	15	41.7%
Region 3 - Northeast	12	3	25.0%
Region 4 - Northwest	11	2	18.2%
Region 5 - Greater Kansas City	78	20	25.6%
Region 6 - Central	23	6	26.1%
Region 7 - Southwest	16	4	25.0%
Region 8 - South Central	66	14	21.2%
Region 9 - East Central	42	9	21.4%
Region 10 - Southeast	55	8	14.5%
Total	358	88	24.6%

For a map of the SPOE regions, visit the First Steps website at:

<https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/first-steps-spoec-contact-information-region>

Authorizations

Table 3 represents the First Steps service authorizations for the 130 children referred to First Steps with a referral source of CAPTA who received First Steps services. As of February 2025, there were a total of 462 active authorizations for the 130 children who had authorized services.

Table 3. First Steps Service Authorizations for Children Referred by CAPTA

Service Type	Authorization Count	Percentage
Early Intervention Testing	118	25.5%
Occupational Therapy	90	19.5%
Special Instruction	87	18.8%
Physical Therapy	70	15.2%
Speech Language Pathology	61	13.2%
Dietary/Nutrition Services	12	2.6%
Assistive Technology	9	1.9%
Translation Services	6	1.3%
Social Work	5	1.1%
Counseling	2	0.4%
Behavior Services	1	0.2%
Audiology	1	0.2%
Grand Total	462	100.0%

Table 4 represents the First Steps service authorizations for the 88 children referred to First Steps with a referral source of DSS who received First Steps services. As of February 2024, there were a total of 336 active authorizations for the 88 children.

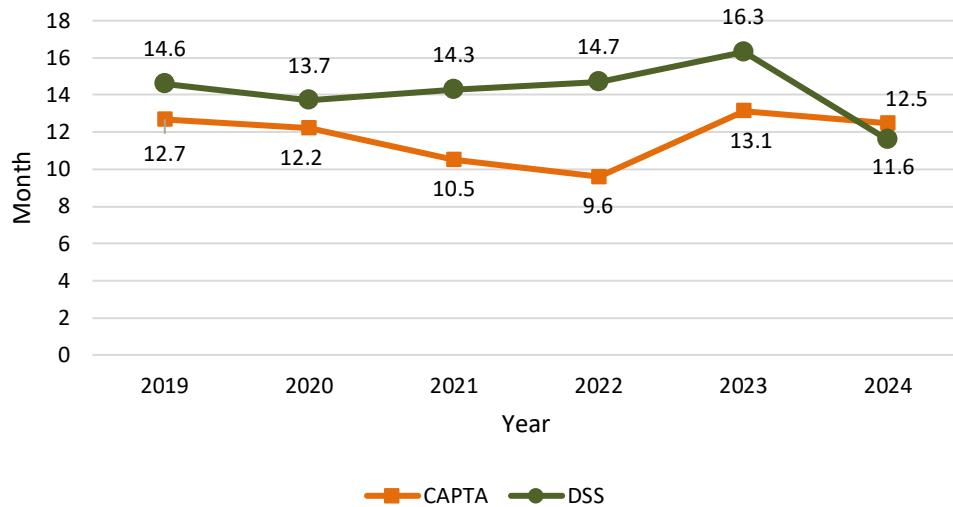
Table 4. First Steps Service Authorizations for Children Referred by DSS

Service Type	Authorization Count	Percentage
Early Intervention Testing	79	23.5%
Special Instruction	72	21.4%
Speech Language Pathology	59	17.6%
Occupational Therapy	49	14.6%
Physical Therapy	43	12.8%
Translation Services	11	3.3%
Audiology	5	1.5%
Assistive Technology	5	1.5%
Counseling	3	0.9%
Behavior Services	3	0.9%
Social Work	3	0.9%
Dietary/Nutrition Services	3	0.9%
Team Mtg - Eligibility	1	0.3%
Grand Total	336	100.0%

Referral Source and Average Age

Table 5 represents the average age, in months, of the 461 children referred to First Steps by CAPTA and the 358 children referred to First Steps by DSS. The average age of children referred to First Steps in 2024 was 12.5 months for CAPTA referrals and 11.6 months for DSS referrals.

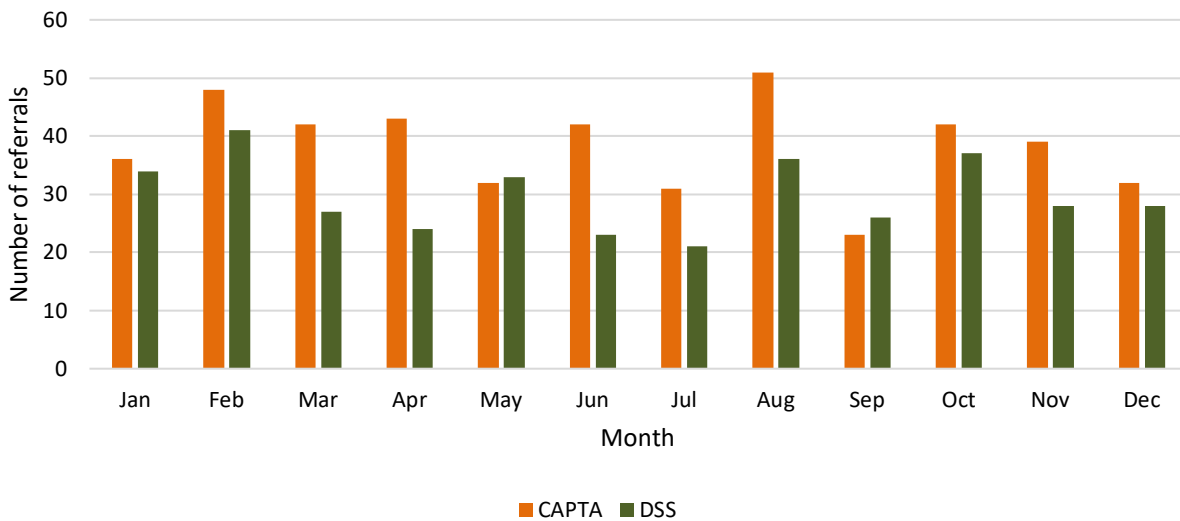
Table 5. Average Age in Months of Children Referred



Referral Source and Referral Month

Table 6 represents the number of children by referral sources and referral month. On average, 38 children were referred by CAPTA and 30 children were referred by DSS each month in 2024. The largest number of children were referred by CAPTA in August and DSS in February, whereas the smallest number of children were referred by CAPTA in September and by DSS in July.

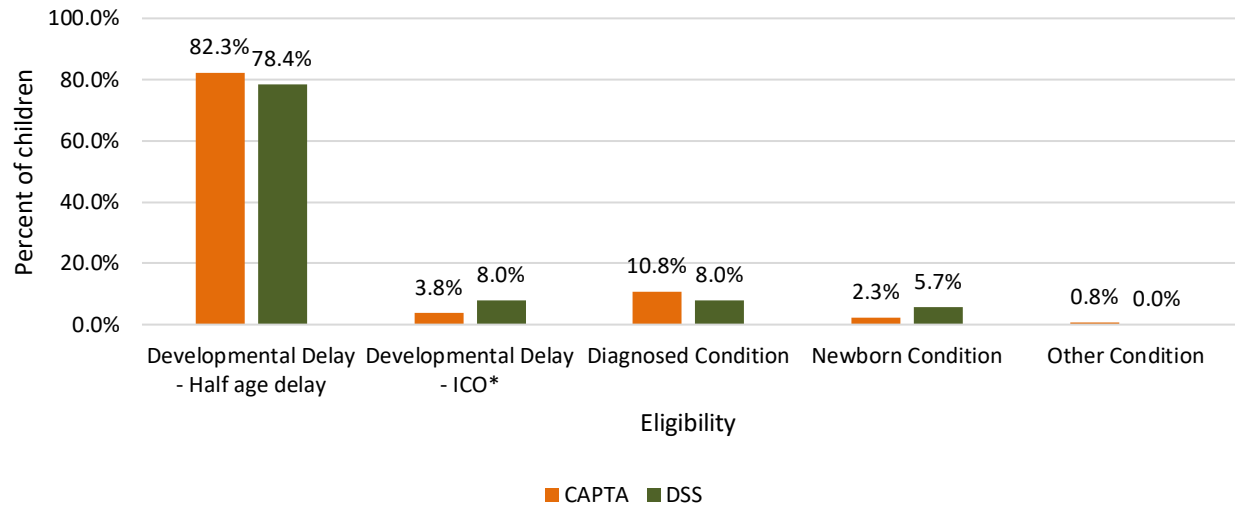
Table 6. Number of Children by Referral Source and Referral Month in 2024



Referral Source and Eligibility

Table 7 represents the percent of children who were referred by CAPTA and DSS and by eligibility category. A majority of children who were referred had Developmental Delay - Half age delay; 82.3 percent in CAPTA and 78.4 percent in DSS. Approximately 11 percent of children referred by CAPTA and 8 percent of children referred by DSS had a Diagnosed Condition.

Table 7. Percent of Children by Referral Source and Eligibility



*Informed Clinical Opinion (ICO)